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AN
AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE
OF THE
EXTRAORDINARY CURE
PERFORMED BY
PRINCE ALEXANDRE HOHENLOHE,
ON
MISS BARBARA O'CONNOR,
A NUN,
IN THE CONVENT OF NEW HALL, NEAR CHELMSFORD;
WITH A
FULL REFUTATION
OF THE NUMEROUS
FALSE REPORTS AND MISREPRESENTATIONS.

BY JOHN BADELEY, M. D.
PROTESTANT PHYSICIAN TO THE CONVENT.

SECOND EDITION.

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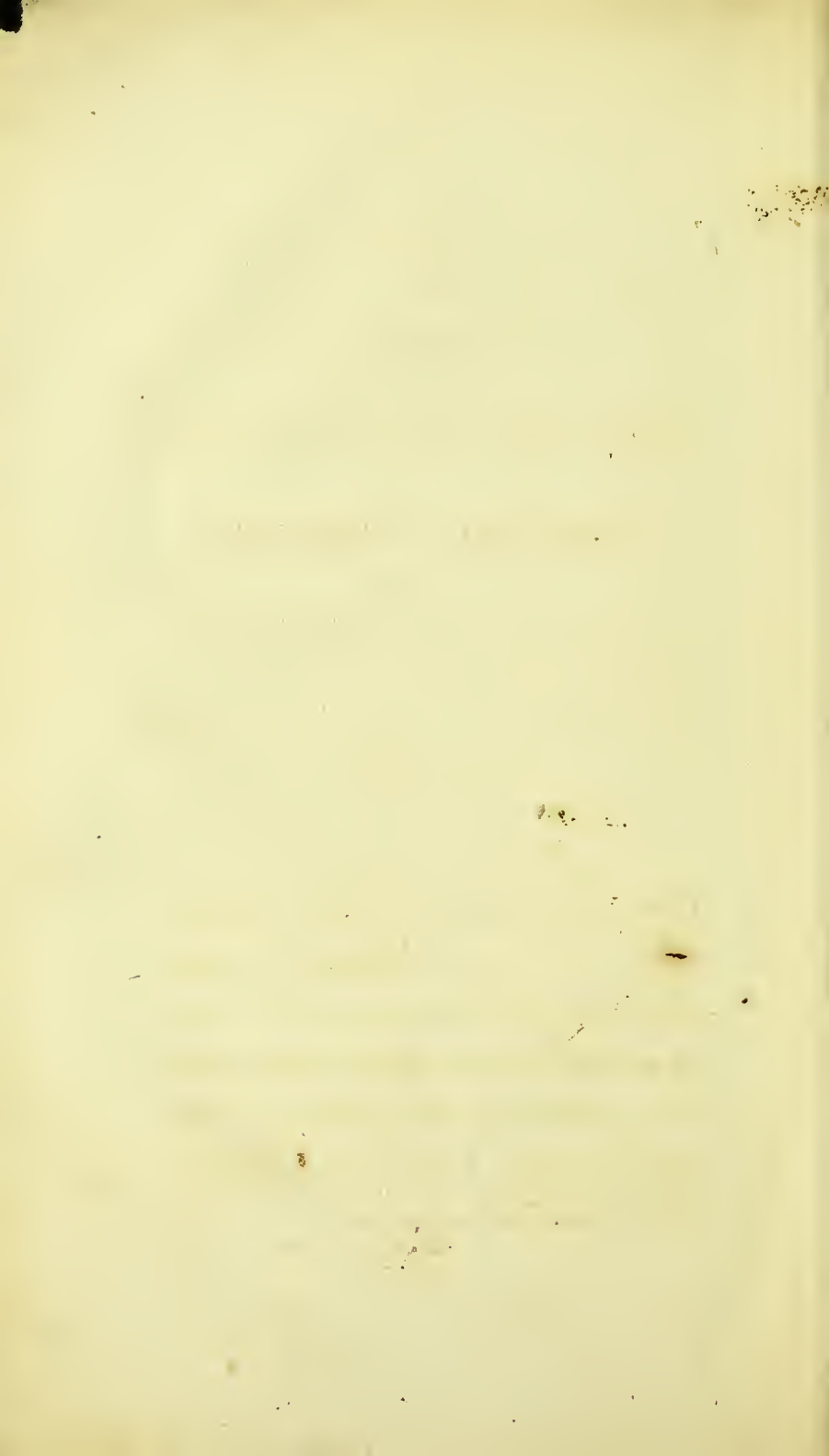
“Ne quid falsi dicere audeat, ne quid veri non audeat.”

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LONDON:
PRINTED FOR G. AND W. B. WHITTAKER,
AVE MARIA LANE, LUDGATE STREET.

1823.

[Price One Shilling and Sixpence.]



AN

AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE,

&c. &c.

THE general interest which the public, in England, France, and Ireland, have taken in the extraordinary recovery of Miss O'Connor, and the illiberal reports, misrepresentations, and wilful falsehoods which have been circulated, render it necessary to publish an authentic statement of the facts.

It is painful to read the illiberal disquisitions which are almost daily issuing from the press, upon this extraordinary case ; all occasioned by Catholics attaching the word *miracle* to it.

The first effort of the human mind, upon any very uncommon occurrence, is to endeavour to investigate the cause of it. When Reason fails in her attempt, and the mind embarks on the boundless ocean of conjecture, it is either driven into the unknown regions of spiritual agency, or is cast away upon the barren continent of incredulity.

Medical men (Catholics in general, as well as Protestants) steer a middle course ; and being in the daily habit of seeing the powerful effect of the mind upon the body, impute

the extraordinary cures performed by Louthembourg, animal magnetism, charms, metallic tractors, and the prayers of Prince Hohenlohe, to the influence of the mind, whilst others explain them by spiritual agency, or miracles, or disbelieve them entirely, and stigmatize them (ignorantly and illiberally) as “*perfect deceit.*” Catholics and Protestants, however, unite, at last, in one opinion; that *perfect faith and confidence in the remedy are indispensable to its success.*

Let all enjoy their respective sentiments: —the abusive disquisitions, to which I have alluded, will certainly not alter them. Catholics will never convince Protestants that cures are performed by modern miracles; and Protestants will never excite doubts of it in Catholics. It will be wise, therefore, in these

disputants, to discontinue their contest, which at last must end where it began—in the conviction of neither. If, however, they determine to persist, I hope they will mix a little courtesy with their controversy.—Instruments cut keenest when set with oil; and the “*fortiter in re*” will not be weakened by the “*suaviter in modo*.”

Every one ought to exercise liberality towards the religious opinions of others, when he considers that belief or unbelief is not an act of volition. Nobody can believe or disbelieve just what he wishes. The faith of every one is regulated by the bias which the mind early received, either from parental influence, education, or different degree of intellect. If we think others in error we may pity, but not censure.

To defend truth, and vindicate the respectable inhabitants of New Hall from groundless ill-natured calumny, is my object in this address; and for that purpose I will first give a short history of Miss O'Connor's case, to correct the misrepresentations and false reports that have been published respecting it.

On the 7th of December, 1820, Miss Barbara O'Connor, a nun, in the convent at New Hall, near Chelmsford, aged thirty, was suddenly attacked, without any evident cause, with a pain in the ball of the right thumb; which rapidly increased, and was succeeded by a swelling of the whole hand and arm, as far as the elbow. It soon became red, and painful to the touch. Mr. Barlow, the skilful surgeon to the convent, was sent for; and applied

leeches, lotions, blisters, fomentations, poultices, long immersions in warm water, and every thing that was judged proper, a long time, without much benefit. One cold application diminished the swelling, but occasioned acute pain in the axilla and mamma. Leeches were applied to the axilla, and the same cold lotion ; by which means the pain was removed from the axilla, and the hand and arm became as bad as before.

On the 5th of January, an incision was made in the ball of the thumb ; only blood followed, no pus. Mr. Carpue, an eminent surgeon, from Dean Street, was sent for on the 7th, and enlarged the incision, expecting pus ; but none appeared.

On the 15th, another incision was made on

the back of the fore-finger; still only blood followed, and with very little relief. As her constitution seemed much affected, I prescribed a course of medicines; and amongst others, mercurials: they were attended with much benefit, but did not affect the salivary glands. The surgeons recommended mercurial friction on the arm, which was continued till salivation was excited. The arm, by this, was much reduced, and remained so several days. It flattered us with some hope of recovery, but it was transient. The symptoms soon returned, as bad as ever, notwithstanding the general health was perfectly re-established; and notwithstanding every thing was done which the London and country surgeons, in consultation, could suggest, during *a whole year and a half*.

Mrs. Gerard, the superior of the convent, having heard of many extraordinary cures, performed by Prince Hohenlohe, of Bamberg, in Germany, employed a friend to request his assistance, which he readily granted, and sent the following instructions, dated Bamberg, March 16, 1822.

“ POUR LA RELIGIEUSE NOVICE EN AN-
GLETERRE.

“ Le trois du Mois de Mai, a huit heures, je dirai, conformément à votre demande, pour votre guérison mes prières. Joignez-y à la même heure, après avoir confessé et communie, les votres, avec cette ferveur evangelique, et cette confiance plénrière que nous

devons à notre Rédempteur Jesus Christ. Excitez au fond de votre cœur les vertus divines d'un vrai repentir, d'un amour Chretien, d'une croyance sans bornes d'être exaucé, et d'une résolution inébranlable de mener une vie exemplaire, a fin de vous maintenir en etat de grace. Agréez l'assurance de ma consideration.

“ PRINCE ALEXANDRE HOHENLOHE.

“ *Bamberg,*

“ *Mars 16, 1822.*”

TRANSLATION.

TO THE RELIGIOUS NUN IN ENGLAND.

On the 3d of May, at eight o'clock, I will offer, in compliance with your request, my

prayers for your recovery. Having made your confession, and communicated, offer up your own also, with that fervency of devotion and entire faith which we owe to our Redeemer Jesus Christ. Stir up from the bottom of your heart the divine virtues of true repentance, of Christian charity to all men, of firm belief that your prayers will be favourably received, and a stedfast resolution to lead an exemplary life, to the end that you may continue in a state of grace.

Accept the assurance of my regard.

PRINCE ALEXANDER HOHENLOHE.

Bamberg,

March 16, 1822.

Miss O'Connor's general health being re-established, and the surgical treatment of the hand being out of my province, I did not see her for some weeks; but having occasion to visit some of the ladies on the second of May, I was requested to look at Miss O'Connor's hand and arm, which I found *as much swollen and bad as I had ever seen them*. The fingers looked ready to burst, and the wrist was fifteen inches in circumference. I did not then know the reason of my being desired to see the hand and arm on that day, not having heard of the application to the Prince.

On the next day, the 3d of May, (a day of particular notice by the Catholics) she went through the religious process prescribed by the Prince. Mass being nearly ended, Miss O'Connor, not finding the immediate relief

she expected, exclaimed, "Thy will be done, oh, Lord! thou hast not thought me worthy of this cure." Almost immediately after, she felt an extraordinary sensation through the whole arm, to the ends of her fingers. The pain instantly left her, and the swelling gradually subsided; but it was some weeks before the hand resumed its natural size and shape. *Now*, I can perceive no difference from the other. The general reports that the arm was paralytic, and that both hand and arm were again as bad as ever, have not the least foundation.

The anonymous authors of some late publications have gone so far as to declare their opinion that "*Miss O'Connor's case is a piece of deceit from the beginning to the end.*" Others have asserted, that it is "*an imposition*

on the public," and Mr. Barlow and myself (two Protestants) are included in the confederacy.

These authors must be totally unacquainted with the inhabitants of New Hall, and I trust as little acquainted with Mr. Barlow and myself. I make no remarks on people who assert so much, from knowing so little—they have written their own characters. Let any unprejudiced person take a view of all, or half, the circumstances, and he must be convinced of almost the impossibility of the truth of this libel. Suppose such a wicked combination of all the nuns and priests; is it probable that such a piece of deceit could have been practised on the London and country medical attendants, *a whole year and a half*, without detection? Is it reasonable to suppose that

the lady (who is not left-handed) would have sacrificed all the convenience and comfort of using her right hand all that time, when the left would have answered the purpose?

Can any one inform me what species of artifice *could* be used to prolong such a state of *constant* pain and swelling *a year and a half*, without losing either limb or life? Admitting it possible to endure the pain even a few weeks, or months, would it not, in a year and a half, be attended with ulterior injury? Could the swelling or pain be continued by ligature, or other means, *constantly* to that degree?

The whole appears to me too absurd to require a reply.

But let us return to Miss O'Connor, whom we left in the chapel, free from pain. This was on the 3d of May. I did not see her again till the 11th. Then it was that I first heard of the application to the Prince. Upon her being informed that I was in the convent, she came into the room, to my great astonishment, putting her hand behind her, and moving her fingers without pain, and with considerable activity, considering the degree of swelling; the hand and arm having hitherto been immoveable, and constantly supported in a sling. I immediately exclaimed, "What have you been doing?"—"Nothing," I declare," she said, "except following the instructions of Prince Hohenlohe."

As she could already use her fingers a little, although only eight days had elapsed, and

they were still much swollen, I asked for a sheet of paper, and folding it up in the form of a letter, inquired if her London surgeon had been informed of the cure. On her replying in the negative, "Then be so obliging, Madam," said I, "to address this to him, and I will write the letter as soon as I reach home." She immediately complied, and wrote very legibly.

Soon after this wonderful recovery was made public, I received innumerable applications to know the truth of it. My confirmation was received very differently by different people. I will select two classes; not only as being very opposite to each other, but containing some argument.

"What shadow of reason," said some, "can

be produced that this cure was not the effect of the prayers; when it took place from the very hour in which they were offered up? There was no interval to give opportunity for being deceived by the use of other means. Nobody would wish for stronger evidence upon other occasions; then why upon this? Let any man who doubts it be asked, whether, when his wife or child is in imminent danger, he does not pray himself, and desire the prayers of the church for their recovery? If he do not expect efficiency from the prayers, why offer them? if he do expect it, then he anticipates as great a miracle as Miss O'Connor's. I see no difference than that Miss O'Connor's was immediate, and others gradual." I told them that their sentiments were very much my own. It must ever remain a secret, known only to the Supreme Being,

whether he grants a recovery to the prayer *specifically*, without intermediate means, or whether he effects it by the mind actuating the *vis medicatrix naturæ* through faith and confidence. But this it is useless for us to know, and presumptuous to inquire.

From the numerous cases that are published in France and Germany, we have no right to doubt that the prayers of the Prince have been more successful than the prayers of others; probably owing to the greater faith and confidence which their celebrity had occasioned. This success and celebrity will, doubtless, continue reciprocally to increase each other: because, united, they will double the confidence and faith that will be placed in them. The prayers of our clergy would, no doubt, be attended with equal success *in restoring health*,

and prolonging life, if the minds of the sick were impressed with the same degree of firm belief, *that the prayers then offering would effect their recovery*; but our clergy confine their visits to the paramount duty of preparing them for their departure from this, to a better world.

It ought not to be expected that the prayers of Prince Hohenlohe, or of any body else, will be always successful. It may please the Supreme Being to grant at one time, and refuse at another. This uncertainty of success was probably the reason why I was not informed of the application to the Prince till after the 3d of May. That very reserve would be a presumptive evidence (were any wanted) that there was no deceit. Had the cure consisted of any fraud, the nuns would not have

been afraid or unwilling to have admitted me, or any Protestant, to that mass; because it would have been in their power to have *insured* success!

My next set of visitants were of a very different description. They had no difficulty in explaining this miraculous cure: "Some discharge," they said, "had, no doubt, just then taken place; or the time for the protracted effect of some medicine had then arrived, but was *concealed from me*;" "for, Catholics," they added, "will go great lengths to establish a *miracle*!" I replied, that an unprejudiced mind would find as much difficulty in believing their explanation, as in believing a miracle; for the Prince must have a wonderful prescience to know, on the 16th of March, that a discharge would take

place at eight o'clock in the morning on the 3d of May! or, that any medicine would have its successful effect at that precise hour!

The truth is, *no discharge ever took place, and no medicine had been taken for some weeks!* These gentlemen seemed to me to belong to that numerous class of society, who find it difficult to believe any thing which they cannot explain; and, unfortunately, some of them let their explanations precede their knowledge; and venture to advance them to the public, without ever having been acquainted with that department of science, from which the *true* explanation must be derived. Solomon had probably been teased with some of this character, when he wrote the 12th verse of the 26th chapter of Proverbs; or he would not have united them

to so hopeless a society with an air of angry despair.

The power of the mind, both in causing and curing diseases of the body, is wonderfully great, and inexplicable. The knowledge of it is principally confined to the medical profession, and even amongst the members of it, it is so limited, that they can do little more than relate instances in confirmation of the truth of it—but, were the knowledge even of those instances more diffused, we should not see so many people have recourse to supernatural agency for explanation of every mysterious occurrence; or, in failure of that, sink into downright incredulity. The knowledge of it being more general, might also tend to correct that natural propensity of illiberal minds, to impute all invisible means,

and every thing that is not within the compass of their understanding, to imposition and wilful deceit.

With the view of calling more general attention to the influence of the mind, I will mention some instances of the great *variety* of its effects. Upon a minute investigation, it would, probably, be found that more than half the diseases, to which the body is subject, might be traced to the immediate or remote agency of the mind ; but these causes, being generally of a private nature, are concealed from the medical attendants ; and many lives are lost from this secrecy. Fretting, and anxiety, by increasing, diminishing, or altering the secretions, or excretions, are a very fruitful source of disease.

A certain great military officer left England, at an advanced age, to take possession of his government, without his lady, and without bidding her farewell. As soon as she heard of his departure, she almost immediately became yellow—took to her bed—refused all food, and medicine—and died in very few weeks.

I have known a medicine succeed, when prescribed by a physician in whom the patient had confidence, which had failed, when prescribed by one in whom he had none. My friend, Dr. Pearson, of George Street, Hanover Square, was sent for, 120 miles from town, to a patient who was prepossessed with the idea that he would recover him; and that the physician who then attended him, did not

understand his disease. He arrived in the night, too late for a consultation. He therefore prescribed a mere *placebo* till they could meet in the morning. It was thought that the patient was in a dying state, and Dr. Pearson did not go to bed, thinking it probable he should be disturbed in the night. Having heard nothing, he concluded that his patient was dead; but to his astonishment and delight, he found, in the morning, that he had slept comfortably during the whole night, from the effect of the draught *on his imagination*; and he gradually recovered from that time.

A brave naval officer, in the British service, who had been confined some weeks by a fit of the gout, was instantly cured by the pleasing agitation of a French frigate approaching.

A friend of mine had a fit of gout brought on by fretting, and cured suddenly by the alarm of a house being on fire. I have known many recoveries from imminent danger, by the relief which the mind experienced after making a will; and most of that danger might have been prevented by having made it when in health.

Who has not felt a keen appetite immediately taken away, on something unpleasant occurring just as it was going to be gratified?

A volume might be filled with cures performed by metallic tractors, charms, animal magnetism, and Louthembourg; all of which were effected by the power of the mind, through faith and confidence. But I will

confine myself to relating one recovery, which was as sudden, perfect, and well attested as Miss O'Connor's. It ought to convince those, who have been so incredulous as to think her's impossible, and so illiberal as to call it *deceit*, that there are others as sudden, perfect, and well attested, in which imposition *could* have no temptation.

Between thirty and forty years ago, Mr. Loutherbouurg, a celebrated landscape painter, was impressed with the idea, that he had a commission from above, to cure diseases! His door was consequently crowded with patients all day. Amongst others, I remembered at that time to have heard that the tenant of a very respectable clergyman, now living in this county, was one, and that his recovery was as rapid and extraordinary as that which

has been recorded. I wrote to him to request the particulars, and received the following reply.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I had the honour of your letter, in reply to which I am to inform you, that I had a tenant who had been afflicted with great pains and swellings, particularly about his loins, so much so that he could not walk across the room. My sister, Lady D——, knowing the bad state of my tenant's health, and having heard of the great cures performed by Mr. Louthembourg, who resided at Hammersmith Terrace, desired me to bring my tenant, *if he was willing*, to her house in Tenterden Street, Hanover Square, that she

might send him to Mr. Loutherbourg, that he might receive benefit. I took him with me, from his house in the country, to Tenterden Street. The next day she sent him in a coach to Hammersmith Terrace. When we arrived, we were shewn into a parlour, my tenant not having been able to walk without being held up; and in about two or three minutes, Mr. Loutherbourg came to us, who immediately addressing himself to my tenant, and looking stedfastly at him, said; "I know your complaint, Sir; look at me!" They continued looking at each other some minutes, and then Mr. Loutherbourg asked him if he did not feel some warmth about his loins? He said, "I do." "Then," said he, "you will feel, in a few minutes, much greater warmth about your loins." My tenant, after

a short pause, said, “ I feel a warmth now about my loins, as if a person was pouring boiling water upon them.” Mr. Loutherbouurg continued looking at his patient full in the face for about two or three minutes, and then said ; “ How did you come here, Sir ?” “ In a coach, Sir.” “ Then,” said Mr. Loutherbouurg, “ go, and discharge your coach, and walk back to Tenterden Street with Mr. R——.”

“ The coach was discharged, and back to Tenterden Street we walked,—a distance of not less than four miles. My tenant offered Mr. Loutherbouurg a bank note of ten pounds, but he would not take a farthing.

“ The next day, my tenant and myself

walked about the streets of London four or five hours, and then returned to Tenterden Street, without being tired. The day following we left it for Essex.

“ My wife joins in compliments to yourself and family.

“ I am, my dear Sir,

“ Your’s, very sincerely,

“ S. R.

“ *June 30, 1822.*”

As soon as I had determined to publish my little narrative, I wrote to this gentleman,

requesting his permission to insert his letter. He readily consented, but requested me to omit names; because they would subject him to receiving many letters, which he had neither time nor inclination to answer. I regret his refusal; because the respectability of his name would have added credibility to the case. It is one, however, which the most incredulous cannot reasonably dispute.

It may possibly be suspected by some, that the disease was imaginary; but this is rendered improbable, by the visible symptom of swelling; and the liberal pecuniary offer which the tenant made, was expressive of gratitude, for the relief from pain.

Thus, I trust, by strong facts, and fair

deductions from them, the calumnious reports concerning the respectable community of New Hall, are satisfactorily refuted.

That the recovery of Miss O'Connor immediately succeeded the instructions of Prince Hohenlohe, *I personally attested.*

The explanation I leave to the different religious principles of those who interest themselves in it. Let Catholics enjoy their opinion, that it was by miracle, in consequence of prayer;—and Protestants, that it was by prayer, without miracle; or by the power of the mind exerted on the body. All, however, must agree, *that the cure was effected by perfect faith and confidence in the remedy.* It forms this remarkable coincidence, that Pro-

testants and Catholics unite, at last, in one belief;—*by faith bodies are saved here, and souls hereafter.*

THE END.



